# MANSFIELD THE MAN — MANSFIELD THE ACTOR

**The Great Player's Home, His Ardent Americanism, His Early Struggles and His Ultimate Rise to the Premiership of the American Stage.**

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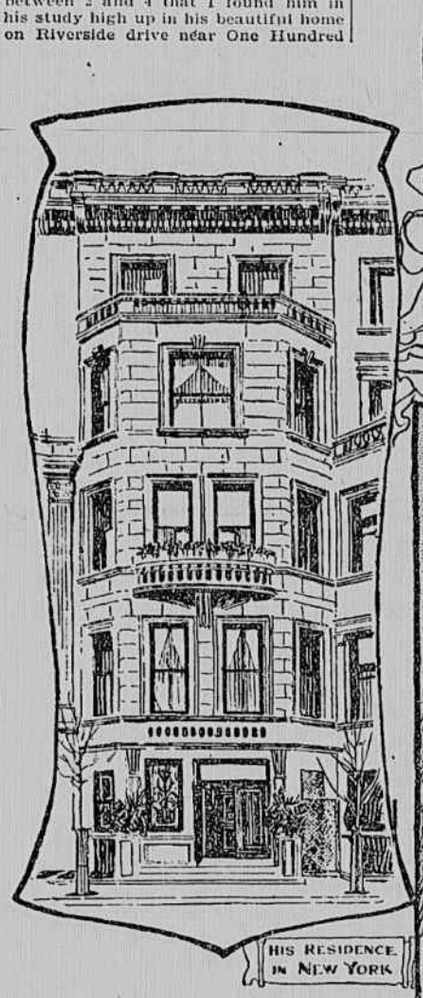
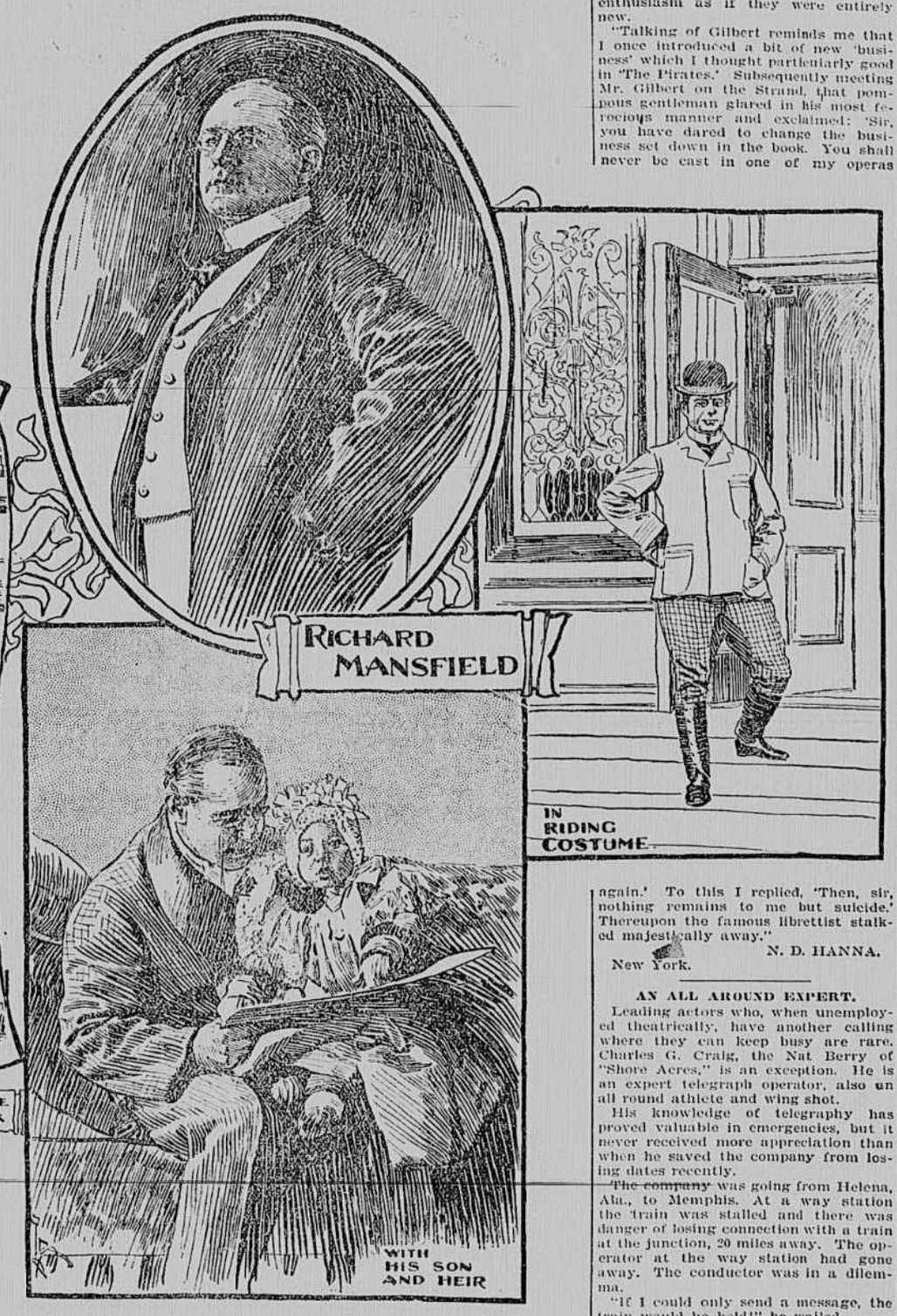
WHEN an interview with Richard Mansfield was suggested, two obstacles at once presented themselves. One was opportunity; the other, Mr. Mansfield himself. Our great actor-manager has no reason to feel amicable toward the reports of his words. His humor, finely edged with irony and sometimes delicate sarcasm, but always playful, seems to miss fire when transferred by another.

As for the obstacle of opportunity, so long as Mansfield plays the Gascon, Cyrano de Bergerac, he simply has no time for anything but work and rest for more energy to apply to work. Every day he sits down to his dinner at half past 4. By 6:30 he is in his dressing room at the Garden theater divesting himself of the garb of a gentleman of the nineteenth century and donning the features, feathers and fixings of Cyrano the ugly and the brave. The play is over at 11:20, he leaves the theater at 12, he is home to supper three-quarters of an hour later, he sups and smokes, and then retires about half past 2. Next morning he rises at 11, breakfasts at 12, attends to his correspondence, and then—yes, then he actually has about two hours' recreation.

It was during this recreative interval between 2 and 4 that I found him in his study high up in his beautiful home on Riverside drive near One Hundred and Fourth street. It is a large, light room, lined with books and prints, with a huge fireplace framing a cozy crackling log and the busy artist's desk in the bow window, heaped with papers, but distinguishable above all by the quill pens. Mr. Mansfield never writes with steel; always with a quill.



HIS RESIDENCE IN NEW YORK






IN RIDING COSTUME

"An interview!" he echoed after he had grasped my hand with the grip of Vulcan and exchanged cheerful greetings. "An interview! Oh, dear, no! Come, have an armchair. You'll find this the better one. Draw up to the hearth, give a little uniformity to the heat of the body with some of this rye inside you, try this cigar—it's a good one, I assure you—and let's forget that we are not in for a picnic. If you wish, I'll tell you some stories, new ones and good ones, which some delightful chaps brought with them to dinner last Sunday evening. But you won't want to print them. They have nothing to do with an interview, which is probably a recommendation. Or perhaps you have something new of your own, eh?"

This was charming, and how fascinating this versatile man can be! But it was not what I came for, and I told him so. He laughed, put another log of wood on the fire, filled my glass again and called attention to the view of the river. The Mansfield house has one of the finest positions on the drive.

He loves nature. He is devoted to his view. He suggested the fine colors, the rarest perspectives, the choicest lines. You know he has the eye of an artist who is a painter, for it was by his brush that he first earned his living. Or shall we be more literal and repeat one of his famous bonmots? Once upon a time a lady suggested: "They tell me, Mr. Mansfield, that you once lived by your paintings?" "No," he replied, "my dear madam; I lived in spite of them."

As we came back to the fire I tried to draw him back to the interview. "Surely, Mr. Mansfield, you have some views, opinions, ideas?"

"To be sure I have."

It is a wonder he wasn't angry with my gaucherie. "But that you would like to express?"

"About what, for instance?"

"Your art."

"My dear young friend, if you or the public want my opinions of the characters I play, my description and analysis will not interpret them for you as my acting will. Every time I play Shylock I give my idea and interpretation of Shylock. A performance of "The Merchant of Venice" is a dramatic essay on Shylock or it is nothing. You ask what I think of Cyrano, his nose, his sorrow, his heroism, his sacrifice? Well, that is best answered and it can only be answered by me in my presentation of the part."

"Do you believe in the imperialism of the American drama?"

"That sounds rather good. To quote Roxane, 'That is the theme; embroider.'"

"Well, America has branched out in conquest, yachting, commerce and literature. What is to become of America's international position in relation to the drama?"

"Just exactly what the American press and public and American self respect will make it. I fear you have touched a tender spring. My whole career as an actor-manager has been a plea for—may I say it—American self respect in the world's theater and an active protest against the patronizing, overbearing attitude of foreigners. Ah, but can you blame the foreigners? Don't they take their cue from Americans? There are enough influential people in this country who are so deluded that they do not know, or are so apish that they will not admit, that our native art is just as fine and no worse than the product of any other nation. They fondle and flatter foreigners and snicker and wink at native artists to curry favor and affect the connoisseur. Let me tell you, they make themselves despised for it, and they bring their country into disrepute along with themselves. The reaction is coming; we can feel it. The flame of Anglomania is now a mere ember, but this flame lights a sad past, a shore full of wrecks of hopes, of strifes, of genius."

"Are you an American?"

"By accident or intent? Geographically I am not an American, for I was not born here. Shall we not, however, consider a man native to the country where he spends all the years of his choice, where he founds his home, to which he gives the offering of all that nature has granted him?"

Instead of answering I paused for a good leading question. We were silent a few moments, watching the flames lap the logs. Then Mansfield began to tell of his early struggle.

"After a precarious existence," said Mr. Mansfield, "during an attempt to become a painter in London, my training as a singer enabled me to obtain an engagement with D'Oyley Carte in a traveling company.'

"The management of that company was most exacting. For the slightest excuse, or none at all, salaries were cut, fines imposed or the victim discharged with short shrift. Before long I felt the halter draw, and, not yielding promptly to unjust demands, was promptly set adrift with scarcely a shilling in my pocket. On the munificent salary of £3 per week it was impossible to lay by anything, and so I journeyed to London with scarcely a shilling in my pocket.

"Reaching my poor lodgings in London, I soon fell into desperate straits. Without money or friends, and with no professional opening, I was soon forced to pawn all of my belongings in order to pay for food. The most gloomy reflections overwhelmed me, and I could see no hope in life.

"This was the condition of affairs when a strange happening befell me. Retiring for the night in a perfectly hopeless frame of mind, I fell into a troubled sleep and dreamed dreams. Finally, toward morning this apparent fantasy came to me. I seemed in my disturbed sleep to hear a cab drive up to the door as if in a great hurry. There was a knock, and in my dream I opened the door and found D'Oyley Carte's yellow haired secretary standing outside. He exclaimed:

"'Can you pack up and catch the train in ten minutes to rejoin the company?'

"'I can,' was the dreamland reply; there seemed to be a rushing about while I swept a few things into my bag, then the cab door was slammed and we were off to the station.

"This was all a dream," continued Mr. Mansfield, "but here is the inexplicable denouement. The dream was so vivid and startling that I immediately awoke with a strange, uncanny sensation and sprang to my feet. It was 6 o'clock. On a chair rested my traveling bag, and, through some impulse which I cannot account for, I picked it up and hurriedly swept into it the few articles that had escaped the pawnshop. It did not take me long to complete my toilet, and then I sat down to think.

"Presently, when I had reached the extreme point of dejection, a cab rattled up, there was a knock, and I opened the door. There stood D'Oyley Carte's secretary, just as I saw him in my dream. He seemed to be in a great flurry and cried out:

"'Can you pack up and reach the station in ten minutes to rejoin the company?'

"'I can,' said I calmly, pointing to my bag. 'It is all ready, for I was expecting you.'

"The man was a little startled by this seemingly strange remark, but bundled me into the cab without further ado, and we were hurried away to the station exactly in accord with my dream. That was the beginning of a long engagement, and, although I have known hard times since, it was the turning point in my career."

And then the conversation fell upon hard luck stories and the harsh experiences in general to which actors are subjected. This incident was contributed by Mr. Mansfield:

"Prior to my long engagement with Mr. Carte I tried to make ends meet by painting pictures and in the capacity of parlor entertainer. Having a good voice, I attracted some attention in the latter capacity, and at last thought my fortune was made when some one offered me £8 per week to give a sort of Grossmith entertainment.

"I was so worked up over the opportunity that when the first night came my nerves were in a woefully unstrung condition, and, sitting down to the piano to begin operations, I went all to pieces and fainted dead away. That was the beginning and end of the engagement, and it was a long time before I again worked up to the magnificent salary of £8, which, you perceive, I did not get on this occasion.

"Speaking of those old time 'Pinafore' and 'Pirates of Penzance' experiences, when in England last year I went into the country to see practically the same company I was identified with 20 years ago, changed in personnel, but having lost no part of its identity. It had been giving the Gilbert and Sullivan operas during all that time, and the people would talk over their roles with as much interest and enthusiasm as if they were entirely new.

"Talking of Gilbert reminds me that I once introduced a bit of new 'business' which I thought particularly good in 'The Pirates.' Subsequently meeting Mr. Gilbert on the Strand, that pompous gentleman glared in his most ferocious manner and exclaimed: 'Sir, you have dared to change the business set down in the book. You shall never be cast in one of my operas again.' To this I replied, 'Then, sir, nothing remains to me but suicide.' Thereupon the famous librettist stalked majestically away."

N. D. HANNA.

New York.

### AN ALL AROUND EXPERT.

Leading actors who, when unemployed theatrically, have another calling where they can keep busy are rare. Charles G. Craig, the Nat Berry of "Shore Acres," is an exception. He is an expert telegraph operator, also an all round athlete and wing shot.

His knowledge of telegraphy has proved valuable in emergencies, but it never received more appreciation than when he saved the company from losing dates recently.

The company was going from Helena, Ala., to Memphis. At a way station the train was stalled and there was danger of losing connection with a train at the junction, 20 miles away. The operator at the way station had gone away. The conductor was in a dilemma.

"If I could only send a message, the train would be held!" he wailed.

"I can send it," said Craig, and he rattled off this:

"Hold train 32 for 'Shore Acres' company," and the troupe reached Memphis in ample time to give the performance. Mr. Craig received a valuable Christmas gift as a reward for getting the company into Memphis.

# WATER POLO

**The Fascinating Water Sport Now In Full Swing ⁘ ⁘ Gossip of the World of Sport ⁘ ⁘**

BY LEO ETHERINGTON.

THE water polo season is now at its height. Teams all over the country are hard at work preparing for the national championship games which will be held this year during the sportsmen's exhibition at Boston. Water polo is one of the fastest and most exciting sports ever played. It is practically football in the water, with this difference—the ball is passed from player to player by means of the hands alone. The feet cannot be used except for swimming purposes. Water polo may be played in any ordinary swimming tank or natatorium. Teams consist of not more than seven players, but usually of five or six.

At the beginning of the game the contestants, clad in the conventional swimming costume of jersey and short trunks, with skullcaps to denote their team, line up at either end of the tank, each team near the goal which it is to defend. The referee takes the ball, tosses it as nearly as possible into the middle of the tank and blows his whistle. The players then dive in a hurry, and all except one on each side race for the ball. The exceptions are the goalkeepers, who remain at the ends and guard the little four-foot boards nailed up just above the level of the water which are the goals. Then the struggle begins.

As the men come together in the middle the player who is quick enough to secure the ball at once passes it back to one of his own side, and then, with the rest of his team, swims along so as to "interfere" for the one who has the ball or else gets into such a position that the ball may be advantageously passed to him. While all this is going on such an amount of splashing, ducking, scrambling and lively work goes on that the spectators are always kept in a roar of laughter and applause.

The idea is to get the ball to the opposing team's goal and touch the board with it while held in the hand. Once this is done, the referee blows his whistle, and the teams again line up for the plunge and start all over again.

In match games ten minute halves are played. To the uninitiated this does not seem a long time, but, as a fact, it takes a trained athlete, with plenty of stamina and gameness, to stand the strain of being buffeted about for that length of time with nothing to stand on.

The game of water polo was introduced into this country from England, where it has been extremely popular for many years. John Robinson first taught it in 1888 to the members of the Boston Athletic association, where he was then swimming instructor. The fine points and possibilities of the game were quickly recognized, until now there are teams in most large cities. It is especially popular among the large athletic and boat clubs and the Y. M. C. A.

Last winter the championship was won by the Knickerbocker A. C. of New York after an exciting session with the N. Y. A. C. experts in a specially prepared tank built in the Madison Square Garden during the sportsmen's show. The "Mercury Footers" are training hard to regain the trophy from the "Cherry Diamonds." In this game, perhaps more than in any other, is the old rivalry between these two crack New York clubs kept up. The Chicago Athletic association has a very strong team again this year and has great hopes of winning the championship at the forthcoming games.

There seems to be a very general feeling on all sides that the present year will witness a very material boom in almost every line of athletic sport. In anticipation of this expected increase of interest clubs and managers all over the country are getting together their teams and in other ways putting things in good shape to catch the tide of prosperity on the flood.

Rowing, tennis, golf, cricket, horse racing and other circles are already showing signs of activity that promise a wealth of sport during the coming spring and summer. The cyclists just now are of course looking forward anxiously to the opening of the Paris exposition, where the professionals hope to reap much gold and the amateurs great glory.

The fact that over 20 American champions at various distances and styles of riding will race in Europe during the coming season would seem at first glance to make the outlook very poor for the sport on this side of the water. As a fact, the reverse is likely to be the case. With the first ranks out of the way there will be ample opportunity for the newcomers to show their ability and more encouragement for them to do their best.

This year, for the first time in several seasons, the sport will be controlled by a single body. The National Cycling association, which practically governed all the northern and eastern tracks last year as far west as the Mississippi, will probably be the recognized head all over the country before the outdoor season opens. The California clubs which seceded from the L. A. W. a few years ago have already asked the N. C. A. to take control of the tracks in their jurisdiction and there is no doubt that the southern association will follow this example.

With Cooper, last year's short distance champion, in France during the summer, and most of the men who pushed him closest also in Europe, there is already a good deal of quiet speculation by the cranks as to who will head the list of winners in this country next fall. There were a lot of good youngsters who came to the front last season. Many of these ought to blossom out as stars of the first magnitude with a little added experience. Among these is W. A. Rutz, the fast young sprinter from New Haven, Conn. He has the necessary speed, staying powers and brain to enable him to rank with the best, and several shrewd judges think that when the records come to be made up at the end of the season his name will head the list.

### WHEN BERNHARDT HATED ACTING.

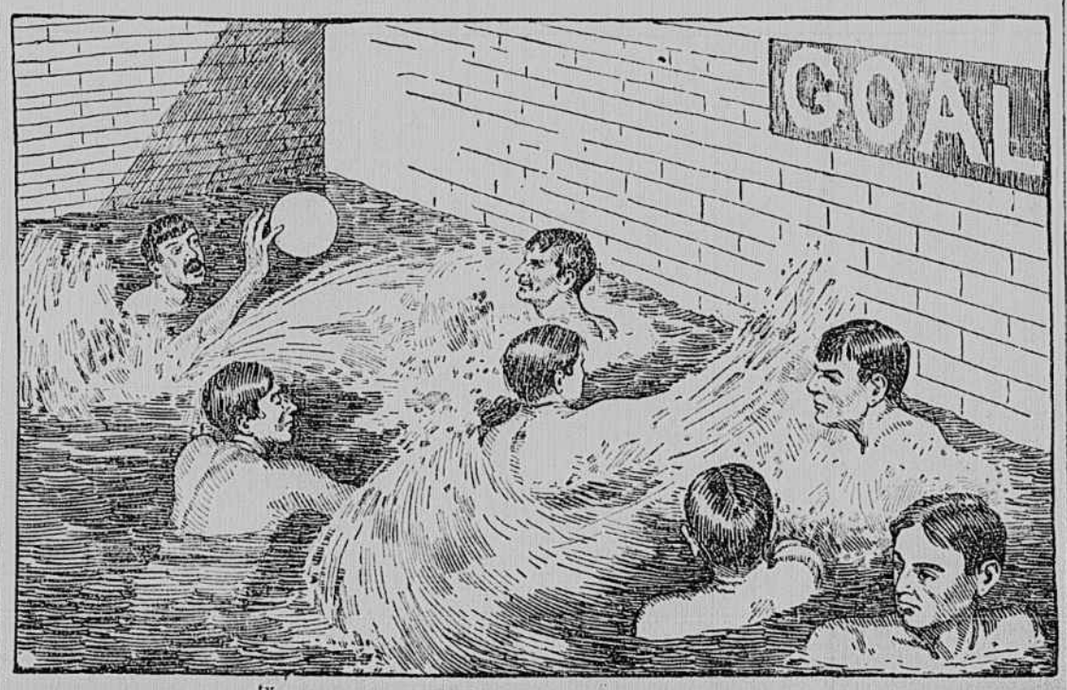
The biography of Sir John Edward Millais, president of the British Royal academy, relates that during various visits to Paris Sir John, of course, met many notable people. Among them were Rosa Bonheur and Sara Bernhardt. The first, when she drove to the station at Fontainebleau to elect him, he mistook for an abbe and could not make out how a priest could be wearing the ribbon of the legion of honor! Of the second he wrote in 1878, after a visit to her house:

"As we entered a boy dressed in white, with yellow hair, sprang from a sofa and greeted us warmly. This seeming boy was Miss Sara Bernhardt, whose masculine attire was assumed for the convenience it afforded for the practice of the art she loves far more than that in which she is famous. She made the astounding declaration to me that she hated acting and would rather succeed in painting or sculpture, or both, than in any other earthly calling. Of her painting I cannot speak, for I saw no completed work; but her sculpture surprised us all and left little doubt that if she devoted herself entirely to that art she would take a high place among its professors."

### DANIELS' TRITE SAYINGS.

The man who said "Let me make the songs of the nation and I care not who make the laws" has a devout follower in Frank Daniels. He has originated more catchy phrases than any man in the theatrical business and has received less credit for them. Among the sayings traceable to him in his many comic opera productions are: "It's a cold day when I get left;" "Am I a wizard?" is still popular; "She can open my letters" is a common expression used to indicate the depth of affection; "If mother could only see me now" is another that appeals to the multitude; "There's only a few of us left" is heard every day, and "He's one of the brainiest men" is a sarcastic utterance handed freely about and used to check the boastful remarks of the omnipresent bore. In "The Ameer" Daniels has not been so successful in his origination of phrases. "Your ship sails Wednesday" is not so broad in its application, and "Wouldn't he make you hesitate?" is meaningless as compared with the others.

Alexandre Bisson, the French playwright, is said to enjoy an income of over $80,000 per annum from royalties. In that case royalties certainly imply the possibility of a royal time.




TRYING FOR A GOAL AT WATER POLO.

## MATSUKI DID HIS PART.

Satsuma Matsuki, a Japanese juggler and acrobat, was filling an engagement in a town where his marked ability as a magician caused the opera house to be crowded every evening. One feat in particular interested his audience. Lying prone upon his back, he would toss a long, light table backward and forward in all conceivable positions to the time of lively music, his tiny feet keeping the table perfectly balanced.

It was Saturday evening. Satsuma Matsuki had been performing for an hour. He had astonished his audience with a score of wonderful achievements, but as yet he had not performed with the table resting on his feet.

Matsuki passed into one of the dressing rooms to change his costume. Scarcely had he closed the door when he heard a sound that made his heart stand still for a moment. A crackling and a hissing, and the next instant a long tongue of flame leaped from the stairway, enveloping a window. Others in the rear of the stage discovered the flames at the same instant, and a fierce battle was begun between the attaches of tha theater and the raging fire. For one brief instant Matsuki stood irresolute. The fire was confined within the dressing room of the right wing, and as yet no one in the audience had an inkling of the grave danger that threatened the house. Those fighting the flames knew that a terrible panic would ensue the moment that the spectators realized the danger. Matsuki understood the situation, too, and in that moment of hesitation he saw the part he must act.

Matsuki stood irresolute.

Matsuki was before his audience. He had placed the rugs hastily in position that he might rest easily. A moment later and the orchestra commenced playing. Matsuki had balanced the table and was gracefully dancing it back and forth, keeping perfect time with his dainty feet. Shortly the measure of the music was quickened, and he was obliged to move more quickly. At one time the table would be at an angle of 45 degrees, and again at 90 degrees, and at the next moment perfectly perpendicular. The long table seemed fairly alive.

Meanwhile those fighting the fire had worked bravely and success was crowning their efforts. They heard the music of the orchestra, and they knew that Matsuki was doing his part to hold the attention of the people. A few moments more and all danger of a stampede would be past.

"Fire!" Some one had seen a puff of smoke issuing from the right wing of the stage.

"Ye-ar, flire!" and Matsuki sent the table nearly to the ceiling, turning a complete somersault in its flight. The audience shouted with delight.

For 20 minutes Matsuki had been in constant activity. The veins stood out upon his arms and temples like whipcords.

"Fire!" Another had noticed a puff of smoke.

"Ye-ar, flire!" and again was the table hurled aloft and caught again with the same dexterity.

The conductor of the orchestra knew not what it all meant. At first he thought that Matsuki had gone mad. Never before had he dared so much. If he was mad, surely no one could deny his astonishing skill.

Matsuki was unable to rise.

A moment later the stage manager walked across the stage and whispered to Matsuki, at the same time placing the table upon the floor. Matsuki was unable to rise. Attendants lifted the brave fellow and carried him behind the scenes. Very shortly the manager returned, and when he spoke his voice was sadly broken.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said he, passing his hand across his forehead, "I have no doubt that you have greatly enjoyed Satsuma Matsuki's performance this evening. He has well merited your generous applause, more, perhaps, than you imagine. I have to inform you that Satsuma Matsuki alone has stood between you and death for the past 20 minutes or more. The danger is past now, and you are at liberty to leave this building, but permit me to say, before you depart, that our friend Matsuki has lost his entire magician's outfit, which cost him over $1,000. Fire has completely destroyed his property. I leave it to you to do what is right, and those who feel gratitude for what Matsuki has done this evening can meet me here on the platform."

There was no hesitation. A long line of men and women was quickly formed, and for an hour the manager received the contributions of those who wished to show their gratitude. When the amount was counted, pledges and all, something over $1,500 was found.

### LIFE OF A PITCHER.

The general impression that the life of a baseball pitcher is so much shorter than that of a player in any other position is erroneous to an extent. There are many cases on record of pitchers who have worked in the big league for more than ten years, and it is rare that a player in any position remains for that length of time. Of the pitchers now in the big league who have been in fast company for ten years or more Dwyer, Griffith, Maul, Weyhing and Cunningham are a few bright examples.

In the old days, Radbourne, Keefe, Buffington and others went on pitching year after year for a decade or more. Perhaps the longest lived pitcher was "Jeems" Galvin, who put in about 15 years of his career on the slabs of the big diamond and is anxious to try it again. All this disproves the theory that pitchers' careers are shorter than those of other players. A little care of the pitching arm will make the diamond life of a twirler as long as that of any other player.